



Consumer Products and Smog

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Most Californians Still Breathe Dirty Air

Ozone, the main ingredient of smog, continues to threaten the health of many Californians. Although the state's air is the cleanest in 30 years, most Californians still live in areas where smog reaches unhealthy levels. Reducing air pollution from cars and businesses hasn't been enough. To meet state and federal air quality standards, many small sources also need to pollute less. This includes consumer products.

Consumer Product Pollution Adds Up

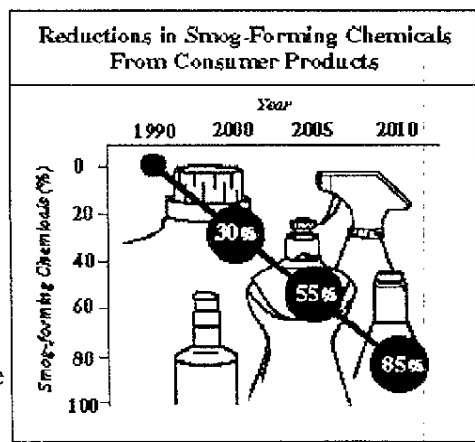
Deodorants, hair spray, cleaning products, and insecticides are examples of common consumer products that are made with ozone-forming chemicals known as volatile organic compounds or VOCs. Although each product only contains a small amount of VOCs, Californians use half a billion of these items every year.


In 1990, consumer products emitted about 265 tons of smog-forming pollution into California's air every day—more than all the refineries and gas stations in the state. Until 1990, the amount of VOCs in these products wasn't regulated.

The Law Requires Cleaner Products

State and federal law now require that consumer products pollute less. California's clean air plan, the State Implementation Plan, commits to an 85 percent reduction in ozone-forming pollution from consumer products.

To achieve this, California's Air Resources Board (ARB) works with industry to make sure that consumer product regulations are technologically and commercially feasible. The ARB is phasing in near, mid, and long-term pollution-reduction measures with target dates





of 2000, 2005, and 2010, respectively. Near-term measures for 28 product categories are in place and mid-term measures were recently adopted for 18 additional categories.

To meet California's clean air goals, manufacturers will cut smog-forming chemicals in consumer products by 85 percent by 2010.

Flexibility for Cost-Effective Solutions

The average cost of reducing pollution from consumer products is comparable to other VOC regulations-about 25 to 85 cents for every pound of VOC emissions prevented. California's consumer product regulations give manufacturers the flexibility to find the most cost-effective approach.


1. **Performance Standards** set allowable VOC content for a product category. Companies can choose how to modify their product formulas to reduce VOC content.
2. **Innovative Products Provision** allows manufacturers to exceed performance standard VOC limits if they can demonstrate alternative ways of lowering emissions. For instance, increasing the amount of "active ingredients" and changing the dispenser can lower the amount of VOC emitted per application.
3. **Alternative Control Plan** allows manufacturers to average, or "bubble," their emissions from noncomplying products with those from products that more than meet the standard. The resulting emissions average must be less than or equal to the emissions that would result had all the products met the standards.
4. **Variances** provide temporary relief from the VOC limits in the consumer product regulation. A company must demonstrate in a public hearing that they cannot comply for reasons beyond their control.



Commercial and Technological Feasibility

The California Clean Air Act requires that the ARB assure that each new consumer product regulation is commercially and technologically feasible and does not eliminate a product form.

Reactivity



Reactivity is the ozone-forming potential of a particular VOC. The ARB is currently working with industry to incorporate reactivity considerations into new or existing consumer product regulations. This increased flexibility for the regulated industry could lead to more cost-effective solutions.